1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

565 178 558 621 Conversely, the nobles were weakened by the fact that their unearned revenue decreased generation by generation, through inheritance and subdivision, so that more and more, if a noble family were locally wealthy and respected, it was not because of its share of taxes but because this particular family was able to produce and conserve wealth in the same manner as the leading commoner families. The ties of such a family with the rest of the nobility were weakened, and its ties with the local village community and its interests were strengthened.

NOBLES AND COMMONERS

565 178 We may summarize this aspect of the social history of the Monguors by saying that when they first settled in their frontier territory and began the transition from nomadism to agriculture, the social distance between commoners and nobles must have been very great. With settled life and the increasing domination of agriculture, noble families, like commoner families, became increasingly dependent on their own ability to manage their own farms, and local prestige was determined more and more by wealth and ability and not primarily by class. Nobles could, in the conventional form of sale, "pass" their fields to commoners, and commoners to nobles. They bought cattle and grain from each other and sold them to each other. Nobles and commoners, if they had the money, joined together to invest in trade. Apart from the important discrimination in favor of nobles in immunity from taxes and corvées, and immunity from being flogged in court, the principal surviving distinctions of the aristocracy are such things as their higher rank at important ceremonies, social precedence at dinners, marriages, funerals, and festivities (even though the noble were a poor man), the custom of calling the nobles "ta jen" (great man), and finally the old custom that when a commoner meets a noble on the road, he must dismount, remove his hat, and unroll his pigtail.

565 178 576 In my own experience, I know of a case of an old man named Chao, of Peiyahua, who, refusing to dismount in this manner, was brought before the T'u-ssu, made to apologize, and required to make an offering of a sheep with red paper pasted on its horns and a piece of red cotton cloth bound on its back, and to present incense and oil to the ancestral temple. It is to the disadvantage, not the advantage, of the nobles as a class that many of them show an overbearing pride. Such men are most conspicuous when, though known to be addicted to opium and gambling, they try to uphold their traditional "rights" by demanding deference from commoners.

THE CLAN ASSEMBLY

175 In the year 1913 the Monguors were entering on a period of trouble and decline. The T'u-ssu institution was threatened. Ever since the beginning of the Chinese Republic in 1911 there had been rumors that the Chinese officials would abolish the institution. The dowager who

[P.68-b]

1; Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

764 bushel basket and presented to the person who has been chosen; this act constitutes the act of appointment. The man thus chosen is assigned an assistant to take care of details. This duty is performed in rotation by heads of families..

769 792 Neither shamans nor lamas take part in this annual veneration of the ancestors. The absence of lamas is particularly striking, because during the year the routine duties of the temple of the guardian deity of the clan are entrusted to one or two lamas, as already described, while three times a year seven lamas take part in special ceremonies of veneration at this temple. The Ch'i T'u-ssu has the right to impose on the monastery of Erhkulung the corvée obligation to provide these lamas, because this monastery was originally built in the territory of the Ch'i clan by express permission, and because it has been given many grants of property by the successive T'u-ssu of the clan.

769 527 More than any other single ceremony, this annual veneration of the ancestors serves to reinforce the group unity of a Monguor clan. There is a visible effect on the clansmen, who normally live secluded in their remote valleys, when at the assembly they see the pomp and splendor of the parade to the graveyard, the soldiers with banners, the T'u-ssu in his official silk robe, adorned with embroidered patches on the breast with glittering dragons—a present from the Emperor when one of his ancestors visited Peking—and all the outstanding members of both the noble and commoner groups in their robes of ceremony. Even the discrimination between nobles and commoners fosters the sense of hierarchy. There is no doubt that the commoners, like the nobles, feel pride in recalling their old glories and are elated by the ceremonies, the festivities, the singing of old songs, and the horse races, wrestling, and merry-making in the open air.

•571 624 The sense of hierarchy, just mentioned, is well exemplified by the behavior of Monguors visiting the T'u-ssu or presenting a request to him. The visitor first prostrates himself, then arises, unrolls his "queue" and removes his hat with his right hand, placing it under his left arm. Then, placing his hands together, palm to palm, he approaches the T'u-ssu. If he is asked to sit down, he does not sit but moves to the left side of the T'u-ssu and kneels on the right knee, with the left knee up, placing his hands, still palm to palm, on the left knee, in the Tibetan manner.[58]

Monguors regard it as the worst kind of incivility to start speaking and to keep the hat on the head in the presence of the T'u-ssu. This appears to be a very old Inner Asian symbol of respect. Among the Uighur Turks in the period of the T'ang dynasty (618–906),

[58] Thus the "outside" knee, farthest from the T'u-ssu, is up, "keeping the luck" between the kneeler and the T'u-ssu. This corresponds to the protocol of kneeling in a Mongol tent where the "outside" knee is that which is nearest the door and "keeps the luck," which is concentrated in the shrine at the back of the tent, within the tent.—O. L.

1; Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

576 624 "when their ministers of state had audience with the Khakhan, etiquette required them to remove the hat and enter with dishevelled hair, something akin to the Hsiungnu custom." [59]

FESTIVAL

527 Chinese merchants, who keep themselves informed of all festival dates among the Monguors, of course gather in great numbers and pitch their tents in the wide valley below the cemetery. The merchants pay taxes for permission to attend such gatherings.

On this occasion, a very large tent was pitched within which the T'u-ssu presided over the festivities, seated in the midst of the nobles, the elders, and all the prominent non-nobles of the clan, receiving the renewed professions of allegiance of his subjects. The chiefs and elders of each village, ceremonially dressed, came up one after another to do homage, bowing kneeling, and performing the *k'o-t'ou* or prostration, taking their time from the master of ceremonies who shouted his directions in a loud voice. The T'u-ssu, at the height of his glory, was happy to entertain each and every man for a few moments. Hundreds of Monguors crowded around, looking on and enjoying the ceremony.

Finally, dinner was eaten by the T'u-ssu and all the chiefs and prominent members of the clan, some seated inside the tent and an overflow outside seated on felt rugs at small tables. The customary whole sheep, the traditional dish of honor of all Inner Asian nomads, was presented to the T'u-ssu. Wine was drunk and tongues began to wag. A couple of girls with pleasing voices were invited to sing the customary songs, outside the tent and in the presence of the crowd. A number of men and women presented graceful dances, each dancing alone without a partner, to the music of a simple guitar-like instrument. Youngsters raced on unsaddled, spirited horses, passing before the tent to cross the finish line, and finally two wrestlers, a Monguor and a Tibetan lama from the monastery of Serkok, were admired and congratulated. A number of Monguors and Tibetans, befuddled with liquor, started fighting, and soldiers closed in on them to restore order. Before sunset most of the crowd had gone, leaving a few small groups still sitting on the ground, singing and making merry.

The Monguors told me that this glorious day seldom passed without a certain amount of disturbance and fighting; but the tradition is that no suits can be brought before the T'u-ssu or the village chiefs for heads smashed, bones broken, and clothes torn on this day of celebration.

ASSIZES OF THE CLAN

692 The next morning the assizes of the clan began inside the big tent, presided over by the T'u-ssu, with the chief

[59] E. H. Parker, *A thousand years of the Tartars*, 211, 2nd ed., London, Kegan, Paul, 1924. (It should be noted, however, that among the Mongols the custom is the opposite; it is an incivility to take off the hat in the presence of a superior.—O. L.)

1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

597 before him and was given the name "Tiger." The new father then led the boy to the family graveyard, taking with him some wine, steamed rolls, meat, paper, and sticks of incense. The boy knelt and honored the spirit of the earth with a libation of wine poured on the ground. He then honored his new ancestors, kneeling and prostrating himself and making a burnt offering of paper and incense. Returning home, the boy was congratulated by the guests who called him by his new name, and he in return honored all the guests as a group by prostrating himself nine times. The ceremonies concluded with a dinner for the guests. The boy was happy with his fine new clothes, and willing to stay with a family that was so much better-off then the one into which he had been born. His father went home, driving a nice cow before him. The boy was to be considered not only as "belonging" to his new family, but as being descended from his new father's ancestors and as fully integrated into the family.

INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR IN THE FAMILY

596 The structure of a Monguor family can be clearly
• 576 seen when a guest is entertained at dinner. Grand-
264 father presides, sitting on the *k'ang* or heated sleeping-platform. Grandmother sits down only if invited by the guest to come up on the *k'ang*. If there is no guest, both grandfather and grandmother sit on the *k'ang*. The younger sons squat on their heels on the floor, in front of the *k'ang*, eating with chopsticks out of a bowl held in the left hand; the elder sons are allowed to sit on the edge of the *k'ang*. The staple of the meal is usually barley-flour noodles. Grandfather reaches out from the *k'ang* and puts some meat and vegetables in each bowl. Each, as he finishes his meal, licks his bowl clean and hands it to his wife to be washed. While the grandfather is sitting on the *k'ang*, none of the daughters-in-law may sit on the floor; they must remain standing.

576 It is disrespectful to present a cracked bowl to a
272 guest. After the food has been eaten, tea is served in the same bowl. Whether food or tea is served, the bowl must always be filled to the brim. Bowls or dishes must always be presented with both hands. Tea is poured with the right hand, while the left hand is held toward the guest, palm upward.

576 One must never step over a person who is sleeping or
606 lying down. Fathers and daughters-in-law must always
291 keep some distance between them. When there is a quarrel in the family, the first reproach by a daughter-in-law is always that "distance has not been kept." This standard of propriety is common to Monguors and Chinese. A daughter-in-law is not allowed to appear before the elder generation or guests bareheaded or without wearing either a long gown or a skirt covering her trousered legs. Only when a daughter-in-law is visiting her own mother's home may she go bare-headed. In her husband's home she must always wear a gown

1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

576 606 291

and a felt hat which is a simpler edition of the ceremonial hat with its additional ornament of a miniature spear and shield.

MARRIAGE AND ITS REGULATION

581 858

Because of the veneration of ancestors and the necessity for having male children in order to carry on the ancestral cult, marriage is not an optional but a necessary part of Monguor life, except of course for lamas. The poorest people will scrimp and save in order to be able to meet the expenses of getting a bride for a son. They will sell animals and land, and go into debt. When a paternal inheritance is divided, money must first be set aside to provide wives for the brothers who are not yet married. People will be consoled or resigned at the death of a husband or wife, but never for the death of an only son, and the sweetest consolation of an old man nearing death is to have married all his sons and to have cradled his grandsons. When two old Monguors meet for the first time, the polite greeting includes the question, "are all your sons married and do you have grandsons?"

582

Exogamy is the first rule of marriage and is strictly observed among the nobles. There is absolute prohibition against marrying a girl belonging to the same clan. Within the clan, therefore, there are no marriages between nobles and commoners, because all bear the same clan name. It has already been noted above, however, that there began to be exceptions to this rule among the commoners in the period of decay and breakdown of the Monguor society, partly because the commoners are in fact not the actual descendants of the ancestors of the noble clan but merely "assimilated" as a result of being the subjects of the noble clan, with the result that poor nobles began to marry their daughters to sons of commoners. It has also been noted that this loosening of the rules among the commoners was aided by the enrollment of Tibetans and Chinese in the Monguor clans; Tibetan and Chinese women were frequently married by Monguor commoners, and occasionally by the nobles.

The rule of exogamy makes impossible marriage between the children of two brothers, but marriages between the children of a brother and a sister are allowable and even frequent, because the sister married out of her brother's clan and her children and his children therefore have different clan names. Very often, also, when family *A* gives a girl to family *B*, family *B* reciprocates by giving a girl to be married to a boy of family *A*. In all marriages, however, boys and girls must be of the same generation—a custom which may be the result of Chinese influence.

581 565

The influence of wealth on marriage is of several kinds. The fact that chiefs of clans and rich nobles and rich commoners are prone to marry girls from rich families, including Chinese families, has already been mentioned. The influence of wealth is also shown when

/32 cont'd/

583 The two parties both make excuses to the other: one for its poverty and the hard times, "I could not offer more, but what is offered is given wholeheartedly"; the other for its indigence, "I was forced to ask for much too much, but now I am more than satisfied with the gifts...."

584 Then when all have taken their places again, the go-between rises and proposes to the family that they present the "flower," that is, the little bride.

They hasten to spread out a red rug or piece of red felt in the middle of the room, and the little bride, chaperoned by a young girl, appears before the assemblage. The two girls hold each other by the hand.

[302] The bride has risen early in the morning, has washed with all kinds of soap, and her hair has been dressed by the most skillful woman in the neighborhood. She has put on her handsomest finery, she has beautiful flowers in her hair, and she is made up in such a way as to be longer recognizable. Her companion, a little girl like herself, has a more modest toilette; she has no flowers in her hair, she wears a black veil on her head. They are certainly "the amazon and the little white goose"; no chance of making a mistake who is the bride.

[516 576] They advance toward the middle of the rug, facing the future father-in-law, let go their hands, bow respectfully, kneel, bow their foreheads to the ground three times, rise, and begin the same prostration over again three times. This is the ancient Chinese greeting on grand occasions. Everything is done gravely and sedately. They are well-trained T'ou-jen girls! Also their childhood games are [524] only the apprenticeship /33/ for the ceremonial. All girls play at ceremonies; they adore them. This is characteristic of the Orient.

583 584 One sees that the "flower" is aware of her own important and that of the moment; she tries to make a good impression on the assemblage, and the future father-in-law smiles, becomes young again, throws on the rug with a generous gesture two or three handfuls of red lozenges and a handful of cash, emblems of good fortune and wealth. The guests do the same. The girls pick up everything.

527 782 [626 cont.] threefold kowtow is again made to the sky. The same ceremony is repeated before the household altar for the other gods.

527 888 576 [627] Gratulation: Meanwhile, the old people of the household have also arisen. Now they, too, pay their New Year's reverence to the sky and the countless spirits. Then they sit down on the kang with the master of the household and the family elder for tea and receive the kowtow from their sons and daughters. Then the general breakfast takes place. The children kowtow before their parents, the younger siblings before the older siblings, the younger cousins before the older cousins, etc. The old ones give younger ones some money.

171 527 [776] The welcoming of joy: Towards midday the welcoming of the god of joy takes place. For this one drives the animals onto the threshing floor, makes an offering of bread and wine, burns incense, waters the animals, and again drives them home. This practice is exactly the same as among the Chinese (7).

[787]

7. [Foreign text p. 629.] At New Year's the Tujen also question all kinds of oracles in a way similar to that of the Chinese, for example, the feed oracle, in connection with which one feeds the animals with various kinds of bread in order to prophesy concerning the harvest (cf. Schröder, "Ying-hsi, and Note 3 above). Another oracle is the ice-breaking. Young boys and men go to the river, take a sheet of ice, and break it apart. In the break lines pictures of species of grain are recognizable; the species that appear most clearly may be expected to have the best harvest during the year. This oracle is also found among the Chinese.

[627 cont.]

527 782 Obo veneration: At the same time or still in the early hours of the morning some family representatives go outside to venerate the obo. On this occasion, after the stone throwing, the air-horses, which are printed on yellow paper, are released. They flutter and whirl about in the wind as a sign of good fortune for the family (4).

4. [Foreign text p. 628f]
Cf. section, "The Mani-tree,"
Note 7.

527 574 Gratulation visits: At midday the villagers visit one another. One takes five to six loaves of bread, sticks of incense, yellow paper, and a little jug of barley wine and goes to the family with which one is friendly. There the guest places the bread before the household altar, lights the little sticks, burns the paper, and pours a few drops of wine on the floor. After that he kowtows before the altar and gratulates the master of the household as well as the individual members of the family. [576] The one of lower standing or the younger one must always kowtow to the one of higher standing on this occasion. Then they sit down on the kang around the fire, drink tea or wine, converse, and sing. Sometimes a round of dancing also follows in the yard.

When women go gratulating, they take no wine, incense, or paper with them, but only bread and tea. They put the bread on the altar, pour some tea on the ground, and then kowtow. They never sit with the men on a kang, however.

It is obligatory that the younger relatives go to the older relatives. In any case on New Year's Day itself one stays in the village. Only from the second day on do the friends and relatives living farther away visit one another.

527 533 Entertainment: During the first 14 days of the new year the people meet every evening at moonrise in the yards. Incense is burned and singers who tell legends are invited. They take turns singing competitively, during which two persons grasp each other by a lappet of the coat. When one of them

/The Monguors/

N *563 M 621 183 178

The village effectively governs itself, punishing offenders, righting wrongs and maintaining peace. Great stress is placed upon faithful adherence to the old customs, and one of the important duties of the village chief is to see that they are observed. In any discussion about village affairs, the supreme argument is that of old customs. To neglect or forget the customs of the ancestors would undermine the stability and prosperity of the clan. (See Social Structure.) This conviction is M [869] dinned into the ears of the young on every possible occasion. A good test of a prospective village chief or T'u-ssu is his firm and unshakable faith in the strict observance of clan tradition.

N *563 M 621 183 177 178

During the administration of the Chinese Nationalists, the village elders had a real struggle to save their old customs and traditions. Social concepts had been undermined gradually by the enrollment of Chinese into Mongour clans, and in villages where Chinese had become elders, Chinese concepts had seeped in and were creating repercussions among the young Mongours.

e. Stealing and gambling

N *563 M [685] [673] [525] [794]

Stealing is considered an unforgiveable sin, and stealing animals is the worst possible form of stealing. All thieves are punished severely; cattle thieves are shown no mercy.

Gambling is not permitted. Any offender must pay a fine, which is used for the upkeep of the temples or the expenses of the spring and autumn religious festivals.

f. Widowhood and remarriage

N *563 M 587

A widow is allowed to remarry, and to make her own decision about whether or whom to marry. If she consents to remarry, she will exchange girdles with her prospective second husband in token of her willingness. If she wishes to marry one man and is being compelled to marry another, she can notify the first of the time of her departure to the home of the second, and the desired mate may kidnap her on the way. If a widow is kidnapped against her will, however, the matter is taken to the chief and the village elders.

g. Discipline of children

N *563 M 869

Children are trained early in life. They attend the meetings at which crimes are discussed and punishment meeted out, and learn first hand that undesirable behavior brings undesirable consequences. They are never shielded from the realities and miseries of life, and as a result they are more sophisticated in their social knowledge than youngsters in other countries.

h. Etiquette

N *563 M 576 264 603

According to custom, only the oldest generation may be seated during meals. When the family is entertaining, the family head presides at the meal. His wife does not sit down unless the guests invite her to do so. During family meals, both grandparents sit on the k'ang, and the elder son may sit on the edge